

sartori resort case study

Sartori Resort's EPBC Act Determination

March 2009

Sartori Resorts proposed a substantial, multi-faceted resort development at Ella Bay in far north Queensland. Anecdotal evidence presented by opponents of the development suggested Ella Bay was a significant marine turtle nesting site. This triggered the reconsideration of the Minister's determination in respect of the proponent's Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act self-referral.

Project requirements overview

This challenge to Sartori's project viability and development schedule demanded a highly credible response.

frc environmental were commissioned to assess the merits of the anecdotal evidence presented, and to contribute to a review of the adequacy of Sartori's original self-referral. In order to complete the assessment and review, frc environmental were required to review existing documentation, undertake a comprehensive field survey and develop a concise report suitable for consideration by the Minister. frc environmental's expertise in turtle nesting ecology was of particular relevance.

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Green turtles nest extensively along the Queensland coast

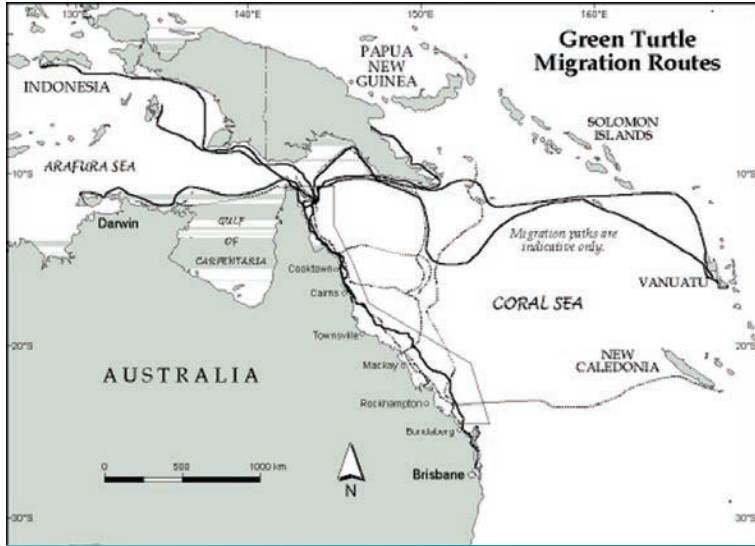
Project Performance

- Rapid mobilisation for field survey
- Thorough review of the literature
- Effective liaison with key researchers and agency staff
- Extensive experience of EPBC Act referrals supported a focused report





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Migration and nesting patterns are inextricably linked - green turtles return to nest at the beach where they hatched



Looking deeper, frc environmental's founding principal maintains an active role across the practice

Our tailored approach and methodology

Within a few days of commissioning, **frc environmental** had Principal Ecologist, Dr John Thorogood on site to conduct an independent survey of turtle nesting habitat and nesting activity. Sartori's chairman Mr Rob Lamb, understood that Dr Thorogood's personal credibility and the '**frc environmental** brand' would be critical in providing a response that gave Environment Australia the confidence to move forward, and the resort's opponents the realisation that Sartori was now in control of the issue.

To support John, ecologists in our Brisbane office reviewed available reports relating to turtle breeding along the far north Queensland coast, and also the breeding ecology of key species. Key researchers and managers within the Department of Environment and Resource Management were also consulted.

frc environmental's experience in supporting and managing self-referrals under the EPBC Act, enabled the timely development of an appropriately focused report.

Whilst it was acknowledged that turtle nesting had not been addressed in the original self-referral, **frc environmental** was able to comprehensively present evidence that made it clear that turtle nesting was not a 'substantive' issue to be considered in respect of proposed development at Ella Bay.

Effective communication with Sartori and with others on Sartori's team enabled a nimble response to evolving issues and provided our client with the confidence that tight deadlines could be met.

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